

Twin Cities German Immersion School Board Meeting
Charter District 4152
July 25th, 2006, 6:30 p.m.
1399 Eustis Street
Saint Paul, MN 55108

A. Opening Remarks

Michael Sampson called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm. Board members James Pearson, Dr. Thekla Rura-Polley, Chris Eliassen, Gretchen Nettet, Scot Stephenson, and Dr. Michael Dorneich were present. Board members Dr. Kenneth Greener and Dr. Stefan Knep were absent. TCGIS Director of Operations, Mary-Fred Bausman-Watkins, TCGIS Director of Curriculum, Marcy Zachmeier-Ruh, and former Office Manager Brian Schnese were also present.

B. Concerns, Comments, Questions

Mr. Sampson welcomed new board member Scot Stephenson.

Mr. Sampson reviewed his visit to the Midway Chamber of Commerce event. The board plans to write a letter of thank you to Bruce Larson for sponsoring our membership this year. The board discussed ways to leverage our membership and participation towards increased visibility and improved fundraising. Mr. Sampson suggested that a representative of the board should attend each monthly meeting, and that board members can split up the schedule to cover the meetings.

Action Item: Ms. Bausman-Watkins

Set up booth at St. Paul Saints game (Bruce Larson organized German night) on Aug 11.

Action Item: Ms. Bausman-Watkins

Notify wider community of the August 11th Saints game.

Action Item: Ms. Bausman-Watkins

Write thank you letter to Bruce Larson for sponsoring our Midway Chamber of Commerce membership.

Action Item: Ms. Bausman-Watkins

Contact Jeff Warner (in charge of charitable giving for Warner Stallion Appliances). to ask for a fridge donation in addition to cash donation.

Action Item: Mr. Sampson

Set up a rotating list of board members to attend MCC monthly meetings. Mr. Sampson to circulate schedule to all members.

Dr. Rura-Polley brought up some concerns about board interactions in general. She felt that the board tends to focus on the positive to a degree that it hinders self-criticism and organizational learning. This led to an in-depth discussion of ways that the board can be more critical while still supporting the school as best as it can. Board responsiveness to parental concerns was also discussed, with the suggestion that the board should designate a parent liaison to follow up with parents who attend board meetings to make sure that their concerns and issues were heard and if any follow on actions need to be taken. The board also discussed appropriate boundaries of Board vs. School areas of responsibilities, with the board being responsible for school direction and oversight, and the school administration being responsible for operations and curriculum concerns. Finding new channels of communication, both from the community to the board, and the board to the community, were discussed with an eye to a more in-depth discussion at the Board retreat on August 5th.

Mr. Sampson suggested that we should schedule a parent meeting. Ms. Zachmeier-Ruh suggested that some time after the school start would be a good time, and Ms. Bausman-Watkins suggested that we can ask parents when the best time for such a meeting should be.

Dr. Rura-Polley introduced the idea that perhaps the curriculum committee should consider extra tutoring help for children falling behind, perhaps during the Cultural Weeks and intercessions, starting in 3rd grade.

Dr. Rura-Polley third point of concern involved the gap in German language exposure by some children during the summer recess. She asked that the school and board think about what we could do next summer to provide opportunities for the students to practice their German over the summer.

Ms. Zachmeier-Ruh expressed her gratitude for being sent to the conference in Denver. She felt it was very worthwhile and she came away with many new ideas for the coming year.

Ms. Bausman-Watkins notified the board that the next federal grant was received.

C. Approval of July 25th 2006 Agenda

Mr. Sampson suggested that we table agenda item G (Strategic Planning), and talk about H (Academic Oversight) right after consent agenda.

Ms. Bausman-Watkins relayed a request from Columba to clarify that is we could get out of the current lease, are we committed to their site. The board agreed that this is the case.

Action Item: Ms. Bausman-Watkins

Notify Columba that they are the only options we are considering are staying in our current facility, or moving to Columba.

Mr. Sampson moved, Dr. Rura-Polley seconded, to approve the July 25th 2006 agenda as amended. The motion carried 7 – 0.

D. Consent Agenda Procedures

Mr. Sampson reviewed Consent Agenda procedures. Briefly, consent agenda items are routine, non-controversial agenda items that can be approved as a group, rather than individually. The intention is to allow the board to devote more of the meeting time to discussion of non-routine items. The use of a Consent agenda requires that each board member coming to the meeting having reviewed all the materials pertaining to the items. In addition, procedures allow any board member to request that an item be removed from the consent agenda and placed in the regular agenda to allow for further discussion.

Mr. Pearson moved, Ms. Nessel seconded, to adopt a consent agenda policy for this and future meeting. The motion carried 7 – 0.

E. Consent Agenda

The proposed consent agenda for this month contained the following items:

- a. Approval of June 20th 2006 Minutes
- b. Treasurers Report
- c. Budget Scorecard

- d. Donation Register
- e. Payment Register
- f. Technology Committee Report
- g. Policies
- h. Contract with Vanguard Cleaning

With regard to this month's consent agenda, Mr. Pearson asked that item "g" (policies), Dr. Rura-Polley asked that item "b" (treasures report) be moved off the consent agenda, Mr. Eliassen asked for items "c" (Budget scorecard) be moved off the consent agenda.

Mr. Sampson moved, Ms. Nettet seconded, that the remaining items on the consent agenda be approved. The motion carried 7 – 0.

Action Item: Mr. Sampson

Check if the school is required to solicit three bids for contracts such as cleaning services.

b. Treasurer's Report

Dr. Rura-Polley would like the Treasure's report to reflect how much money is in each fund (finance source), to have visibility into SOD. The Finance Committee will be presenting a new cash flow report in September.

c. Budget Scorecard

Mr. Eliassen comment on budget scorecard. The apparent budget discrepancy on the scorecard is an artifact due to the fact that we have encumbered revenue and expenses that show up on budget but will not show up on cash flow due to the fact that we had to close the books for the year. One is cash flow and the other is encumbered.

Ms. Bausman-Watkins notified the board that we are not in "Statutory Operating Debt" (SOD) for the 2005-2006 year. In addition, the federal grant was renewed on June 30, 2006.

Dr. Dorneich moved, Mr. Sampson seconded, that the Treasurer's Report and the Budget Scorecard be accepted. The motion carried 7 – 0.

g. Pledge of Allegiance Policy

Mr. Pearson asked to discuss this particular policy since last year there was disagreement within the board about the final decision (i.e. the vote was not unanimous). The Pledge of Allegiance policy in force during the 2005-2006 school year was as follows (in part): "Students in the Twin Cities German Immersion School shall not be required to recite the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. Students will be instructed in the proper etiquette toward, correct display of, and respect for the flag, and in patriotic exercises." The pledge of allegiance policy, unlike most school policies, is required to be approved every year.

Although Dr. Greener was not present, Mr. Sampson summed up Dr. Greener's position as being in favor of requiring students to recite the pledge for three reasons (1) it would make our kids feel different than other school's kids, (2) it is important for kids to learn respect for the pledge, and (3) we are an American school. The board's rationale for waiving the requirement to say the pledge was as follows: (1) the pledge is not in German and all school instruction/.activities are in German, and (2) it would fit in well in third grade when we start teaching English. Mr. Stephenson felt that the pledge would be more

meaningful to third graders than younger children.

Mr. Pearson moved, Mr. Stephenson seconded, to approve the Pledge of Allegiance policy for the 2006-2007 school year with no changes from the previous year. The motion carried 6 – 0, with 1 abstention.

F. Academic Oversight
g. TCGIS start times

Ms. Bausman-Watkins presented a proposal by the Charter School Consortium with regards to busing. For the 2006-2007 school year, the Consortium currently has a bus idle, and is offering TCGIS 1 bus route per day at a price of \$10,000-\$15,000 per year. Full bus service would typically cost around \$25,000/year. However, the bus they are offering would require a 9:00am – 4:00 pm school day.

The discussion that following revealed several pros and cons:

- Pro: offering busing this year would allow TCGIS to gain experience busing students
- Pro: the price for this year is reasonable
- Con: the start and end time for the school year would result in parents encountering both morning and afternoon rush hours. TCGIS has many parents who commute quite a distance (1/3 of enrollment is outside Minneapolis/St. Paul).
- Con: 1 bus route would force the school into a position of being able to offer some students busing while not being able to offer all students busing.
- Con: The board felt that the decision of which route and a large change in start times needs parental feedback. There is not time to get that feedback from this year's busing decision.

The board decided to not pursue the offer of busing with the Charter School Consortium at this time.

Ms. Bausman-Watkins discussed the impact start times and proposed moving the school start time to address some parental concerns about encountering afternoon rush hour. Several parents said a change of even 15 minutes would help tremendously those parents faced with a long commute,

Mr. Pearson moved, Mr. Stephenson seconded, to move the start and end times of the school day by 15 minutes, to 8:30 to 3:30, for the 2006-2007 school year. The motion carried 7 – 0.

Action Item: Ms. Bausman-Watkins
Communicate to parents the new start times.

Action Item: Ms. Kate Wagner
Change parent handbook to reflect new starting times.

G. Financial Oversight
g. Update on enrollment numbers

Enrollment stands at 33 kindergartners (+ 2 fairly definite, +2 on paper but no contact all summer, +2 interested), 23 first graders, and 19 second graders.

h. Three year budget projection – presentation

Mr. Eliassen presented the three year budget projection for Year 2 (Y2, 2006-2007) through Y4 (2008-2009). There is a significant budget shortfall in Y3 due to the fact that the startup and Walton grants run out.

i. Implications – discussion

The board discussed the principle means to address the Y3 budget shortfall. It was agreed that grant writing and fundraising was key. In addition, facilities issues impact the budget. Dr. Dorneich agreed to lead a grants committee to strategize about where and how best to apply our efforts and resources.

Action Item: Dr. Dorneich

Formulate a Grants Committee and call the first meeting.

H. Strategic Planning

- g. Recruitment**
- h. Transportation**
- i. Facilities**

This agenda item was deferred to the Board Retreat on August 5, 2006

I. Review Action Items

J. Other Business

Action Item: Mr. Sampson

Draft amended by-laws to limit voting rights for board elections to parents and staff, as required by Minnesota statute.

The board agreed to tentatively reschedule the 26 December 2006 board meeting to 19 December 2006.

K. Adjourn

Mr. Sampson moved, Dr. Dorneich seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried 7 – 0. The board meeting was adjourned at 9:42 PM.

Twin Cities German Immersion School Board Secretary

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Date July 25, 2006 Minutes Approved by TCGIS Board: _____

Date July 25, 2006 Minutes sent to MN Dept. Education: _____
